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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: CODEL MCCAIN TO ABDULMAHDI: NEED POLITICAL PROGRESS

Classified By: DEPUTY POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT WALLER, FOR REASONS 1.
4 (B) AND (D).

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary. On November 23 Senators John McCain, Saxby Chambliss, Lindsey Graham, John Barasso and Governor Jon Huntsman met with Deputy President Adil Abdulmahdi, advisor Zuhair Humadi, and former oil minister Ibrahim Bahr Ulum. The American delegation repeatedly emphasized the need for political progress in Iraq to counter decreasing American support for the war. The two sides also discussed oil corruption, Iran's nuclear ambitions, and the need for more Arab countries to send Ambassadors to Iraq. End Summary.

[¶2.](#) (C) McCain opened the meeting by asking about reports of corruption within the oil ministry. Abdulmahdi replied that it was a sensitive issue and that he had yet to confirm the reports. Later McCain returned to the subject, pointing out that FedEx knows the location of every package it sends worldwide while the Iraqi oil ministry cannot account for 20-30% of the oil it produces. "The Iraqi people need and deserve better," he concluded.

[¶3.](#) (C) The American delegation repeatedly emphasize the importance of political progress in Iraq. McCain explained that political support for the war was decreasing and that even Republicans would withdraw their support for continued funding in the absence of any clear political achievements. Abdulmahdi stressed signs of political progress, including the delivery of the 2008 budget to the Council of Representatives (CoR), Sadr's declaration of a 'freeze' on JAM, and the upcoming declaration of the U.S. - Iraq strategic relationship. In response to repeated questions from the delegation Abdulmahdi predicted the "Justice and Accountability" (de-Ba'ath) law would be passed before January 1. Graham expressed frustration that Maliki did not give the same answer when asked the question earlier in the day.

[¶4.](#) (C) In response to Chambliss' question about Iran's "nuclear weaponization," Abdulmahdi replied that the Iraq government was concerned over Iranian influence and constantly pressure Iran to implement "good policies." He said that Iraqis too were concerned over Iran's nuclear program and expressed hope that Iran would eventually sign an agreement abandoning its nuclear ambitions. Although asked Abdulmahdi declined to provide any specific advice on U.S. policy towards Iran, saying instead that "we wish there is no war."

[¶5.](#) (C) McCain suggested that more Arab countries needed to send ambassadors to Iraq. Abdulmahdi said that Egyptian President Mubarak recently promised to send an ambassador to Iraq. Humaidi added, "But senator, a nudge from you would really help." The delegation promised to approach Arab ambassadors in Washington, DC to press them on the issue.

[¶6.](#) (C) CODEL McCain did not have an opportunity to review this cable before leaving Iraq.
CROCKER